



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
The Director-General

Brussels
ENV/D.3/NN/AB

Dear petitioner,

Thank you for your letter in which you raise the issue of wolf hunting in Slovakia.

Slovak wolf populations are not strictly protected and can be managed in accordance with Article 14 of the Habitats Directive¹. This means that specimens of the wolf may be taken in the wild, i.e. they may be hunted, but this must be compatible with maintaining their population at a favourable conservation status.

Following an infringement procedure initiated by the Commission in 2013 and closed in 2016, the annual quota for wolves was significantly reduced in Slovakia. In addition, hunting in Natura 2000 sites where the wolf is protected as well as in areas close to the border with Hungary, Poland and Czechia was prohibited. These steps should help maintain the favourable conservation status of the species in Slovakia as well as in the neighbouring countries. According to the latest report submitted by Slovakia under Article 17 of the Directive, the species is in favourable conservation status in the Alpine biogeographical region where nearly the entire population occurs (300 to 600 individuals).

In the framework of the above infringement procedure, Slovakia adopted a wolf management plan in 2016, which, among others, provides for the monitoring of wolf populations. In this management plan Slovakia committed to estimate the number of wolves on the basis of DNA analyses which are essential in order to avoid double counting. It is our understanding that the results of these analyses by the State Nature Conservancy could be available next year, providing a more solid foundation for setting the annual hunting quota.

It is for the Slovak authorities to ensure that, taking into account all relevant information and applying the precautionary principle when available information is not conclusive, wolf hunting quotas comply with the Habitats Directive.

I would like to thank you for your interest and commitment to protect the wolf in Slovakia.

Yours faithfully,

(e-signed)

Florika FINK- HOOIJER

¹ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. (OJ L 206 of 22.7.1992, p. 7).